

# The Acting Provost's Weekly Brief

**March 8, 2017**

Greetings! We are in the midst of a busy season following the developments in Santa Fe and incorporating them into the planning for the University. This planning will take on both short- and long-term aspects. In the short run, we will work within the parameters of our current structure and budget resources. In the long term, we have the opportunity and the need to assess priorities and the mechanisms we employ in service to our mission.

This work will be ongoing. We do not want to lose sight of longer-term considerations for the demands of the short term. The discussion below reflects the challenges of the current environment, but should also keep a view towards the future. As always, thank you for the work you are doing to further UNM's academic mission. If you have questions or comments, please let me know.

## **Board of Regents Finance and Facilities Committee**

The Board of Regents (BoR) [Finance and Facilities Committee](#) met yesterday. The agenda topics included a progress report from the Budget Leadership Team (discussed further below), differential tuition proposals from the Schools of Engineering and Law, and an update on major capital projects. The full agenda can be found [here](#). The budget and differential tuition discussions were information items to the committee, as the final consideration will be a part of the ongoing overall budget recommendations.

## **Budget Leadership Team**

The [progress report](#) (page 125) from the BLT to the BoR Finance and Facilities Committee included descriptions of the BLT subcommittee responsibilities, and an update on the approximate beginning budget gap (the difference between estimated revenues and expenditures based on FY17 amounts) for FY18. The estimated budget gap presented is approximately \$11.6 million. The BLT is working on recommendations for both revenue and expenditures to address this projected shortfall. The committee is also monitoring current developments in Santa Fe that may impact these estimates.

As a reminder, the subcommittees of the BLT and their scope is as follows: The **FY18 Budget Development Committee** developed the FY18 Instruction and General (I&G) budget scenario (a draft of which can be seen in the above-linked e-book), and incorporated subcommittee recommendations on revenues, expenditures, and other items. The **New Revenue Models Committee** is responsible for the

investigation of online opportunities, such as the development of new Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and other forms of external revenue. The **Tuition/Fee Modeling Committee** is looking at ways to restructure and simplify tuition and fee rates, and the **Cost/Reallocation Committee** is considering cost savings through efficiencies, resource reallocation, and sustainable funding models. These include shared service models, outsourcing, making better use of non-I&G resources, and other cost-saving models.

## **Navigating Today's Information Environment**

Recently, there has been much discussion of the new terms “alternative facts” and “fake news.” Barbara Fister will present a lecture tomorrow addressing these terms and their implications for navigating today's information environment. Her talk, “Practicing Freedom for the Post-Truth Era,” will “explore ways to prepare students who are entering a world saturated with personalized propaganda and alternative facts to be free human beings and empowered citizens.” Barbara Fister is a professor and librarian at Gustavus Adolphus College, a regular contributor to Inside Higher Education, and a widely published researcher. The lecture will be held tomorrow at 9 a.m. in the Willard Room of Zimmerman Library. There is a registration link in the [Events Calendar page](#).

## **Legislative Update**

On Tuesday, Government Relations reported that legislators were considering “an additional 4.6 percent reduction to all remaining state agencies and higher education, over and above the one percent cut already taken by the House. Under this dismal scenario, higher education would lose another \$36 million.” There are two weeks remaining this session, so we will see how this develops, but the outlook continues to present us with significant challenges.

On Sunday, the House approved HB108, which is the bill covering recent State efforts around higher education articulation, common course numbering, and the creation of meta-majors. The final proposed legislation included statements suggested by UNM students. This bill lowers the minimum number of credit hours required by the State for core curriculum at NM colleges and universities. It will take significant time, effort, and collaboration before we adopt changes to our core curriculum. There is currently a Faculty Senate taskforce investigating the possibilities of modifying the core at some point.

## **2017 Financial Fitness Forum**

The UNM Benefits office is providing the [2017 Financial Fitness Forum](#) for faculty and staff on March 21-22. The first event will be held on North Campus, in the Domenici Center and Health Sciences Library on Tuesday, March 21. The second event will be held on Main Campus in the Student Union Building on Wednesday, March 22. These [sessions](#) are a great way to improve your savings and investment plans, gain protection against catastrophic risks, and be better prepared for retirement. Information about the times and topics of individual sessions can be found [here](#).



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A PDF version of this weekly brief is available on the [Academic Affairs website](#). Your feedback and input are welcome at [provost@unm.edu](mailto:provost@unm.edu).